

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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July 20, 2011

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley,

With great concern I write to urge you to refrain from using the power of your office to promote the redefinition of marriage in Maryland. In doing so, I speak not only on behalf of the Catholic Church in Maryland, but in unison with all those in our state who recognize the critical value of the institution of marriage to our society.

Our voices are not motivated by hate or ignorance, but by a faithful adherence to the nature of men and women and their unique capacities as mothers and fathers. Nor do we speak solely from religious principles. Preserving the central role of the natural family unit has always been - and should continue to be - the reason why our government recognizes marriage as existing between one man and one woman.

I am well aware that the recent events in New York have intensified pressure on you to lend your active support to legislation to redefine marriage, and that some are asking you to include a same-sex marriage bill in your legislative package next year. As advocates for the truths we are compelled to uphold, we speak with equal intensity and urgency in opposition to your promoting a goal that so deeply conflicts with your faith, not to mention the best interests of our society. It is especially hard to fathom your taking such a step, given the fact that our requests last year for you to sponsor legislation to repeal the death penalty and support students in Catholic and other nonpublic schools went unheeded.

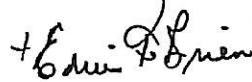
In reaching the decision last year not to redefine marriage, the members of our General Assembly were also subjected to intense pressure, both from the public and from legislative leadership, despite leaders' claims that this was a "vote of conscience." Admirably, many legislators, prompted by their deeply held moral convictions and those of the constituents they were elected to represent, courageously resisted the all-too-familiar pull of partisan allegiances and political ambition in making their decision to uphold marriage. Such courage is rare in politics and can best be rewarded if it serves as an example for others to emulate.

As we have recently stated publicly, Maryland is not New York. We urge you not to allow your role as the leader of our state to be used in allowing the debate surrounding the

definition of marriage to be determined by mere political expediency. The people of Maryland deserve no less.

I welcome the opportunity to speak personally with you on this issue, and hope you will not hesitate to contact me should you wish to do so. As always, I will continue to keep you and all our elected leaders in my prayers.

In the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Edwin F. O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+Edwin F. O'Brien
Archbishop of Baltimore